

A COMMENT

DEAR EDITOR: The nurse's letter on page 545 of the April issue seems quite inconsistent with the difficulty of the Red Cross in obtaining volunteers and the advertisement of the National Headquarters of many positions to be filled.

H. F. K.

SUGGESTIONS

DEAR EDITOR: The other day while reading an editorial article in the nursing journal I came to a part which said, "that nurses doing private duty seldom write about their work, and that it sometimes seems as if all the women of ability had taken up hospital work."

I, for one, believe that to-day no nurse with much individuality or ability can remain long in private practice and therefore they either give up the profession altogether or commence to do institutional work, if they feel they can afford to work for the small salary paid.

I continue to do private nursing not that I wish to, but, first, because I enjoy taking care of the sick and am happy while doing it; secondly, I do not approve of caps, aprons, bibs, etc., that nurses are obliged to wear when in an institution—superintendents excepted. I do not wear any of the above while doing private nursing and why should we be compelled to while in hospitals as graduates or when nurses in training. Nothing is cleaner or neater than a plain well-made white dress and I am sure the nurses would soon adjust themselves to keeping a dress spotless when once they became accustomed to not having an apron to spot and change at will; as for laundry, two white dresses a week is a great deal less than one dress and half a dozen aprons, bibs, and cuffs. On the other hand white will boil and gingham won't.

Again, take the District Nursing Associations of some of the cities. The hats the nurses are compelled to wear make most of them look "frights." In no other profession, except where it is due to the individuals' eccentricity, do they show such lack of all beauty in dress as in the nursing profession. It is much more economical to get something you will look your best in, even if you have to wear it three times as long, as to buy some cheap, gaudy, or dowdy clothing that only helps to spoil the beauty around us.

I have always felt that it would be of benefit to the public if the rich who give money to build hospitals in small towns, in memory of themselves or some relation, or as in some cases where the town appro-

priates the money, would give a fund the proceeds from which should be used in paying competent district nurses to make daily rounds among the sick. The poor would have the best private nurses and the public would derive untold good from it compared to the benefit received from small hospitals. I feel justified in saying that half a dozen paid nurses in some of these smaller towns and no hospital would do infinitely more good than hospitals and would not cost as much in the end. If we had less of these small hospitals we would have fewer poorly trained nurses and it would open up a field for the competent graduate nurse.

I am certain if nurses and doctors would bring before the public the need of funds to carry on hospital work they would be left larger amounts and in the end those who are connected with the work of the hospital would be paid a sufficient salary to enable them to save a little for sickness or old age. If nurses are to give their time and often health in caring for the sick and receive so little in return that they can't save any, it means they become a burden to some one later on, perhaps the hospital they have been in, hence nothing is gained in the end but much lost.

M. J. U., Boston.



FEED THE HOSPITAL PATIENT.—In an editorial under this heading *The New York Medical Journal* makes an earnest plea for more care in selecting and preparing food for hospital patients. It says:

In almost all our hospitals the food provided for the patients is abominably repulsive. It is furnished in abundance, and we do not doubt that it is for the most part nutritious. With a trifling increase of expense it might be made appetizing, and nobody will deny that a sick man's inclination to take food ought to be encouraged rather than smothered.

As regards our hospitals, cookery seems to be a lost art—at all events one that is ignored. Proper attention to the marketing will procure unexcelled roasting pieces of beef at a moderate cost, and the slices ought to come to the wards in better condition than that in which they are ordinarily to be obtained in expensive restaurants, for the patients all dine at a fixed hour, so that the meat has not to be kept warm for an indefinite length of time, whereby the life is steamed out of it. It will not do to say that the patient comes from the slums and has never been used to good living; he is sick, and it would be the part of wisdom to induce him to eat heartily during his convalescence, so as to shorten his necessary stay in the hospital.